

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing a thin-film magnetic head, the method comprising the steps of:
 - forming a first magnetic pole layer;
 - removing both sides in a track width direction of the first magnetic pole layer so as to leave a predetermined residual area in the first magnetic pole layer;
 - forming an insulating layer about the residual area of the first magnetic pole layer;
 - forming a gap layer made of a nonmagnetic material on the residual area of the first magnetic pole layer and the insulating layer;
 - forming, on the gap layer, a second magnetic pole layer magnetically connected to the first magnetic pole layer; and
 - patterning the second magnetic pole layer and the gap layer by etching at the same time while using a mask protecting the first magnetic pole layer from etching with a mask formed by the gap layer and the insulating layer formed about the residual area of the first magnetic pole layer, so that a width of the second magnetic pole layer in the track width direction is smaller than that of the residual area.
2. (Original) A method of manufacturing a thin-film magnetic head according to claim 1, wherein the insulating layer is formed from Al_2O_3 .
3. (Original) A method of manufacturing a thin-film magnetic head according to claim 1, wherein the residual area of the first magnetic pole layer has a width of about $0.5\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ to about $2.0\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ in the track width direction.

4. (Original) A method of manufacturing a thin-film magnetic head according to claim 1, wherein the first magnetic pole layer is constructed by laminating a plurality of magnetic layers;

wherein at least the topmost layer in the plurality of magnetic layers is formed with the residual area; and

wherein the insulating layer is formed on both sides in the track width direction of the residual area.